

Over 20 Oregon post offices taken off the closure list

WASHINGTON, DC--U.S. Congressman Peter DeFazio (D-Springfield) applauded the United States Postal Service's decision to take the Agness post office off its list of proposed closures. DeFazio had sent a letter to the Postmaster General strongly urging USPS to keep this post office open. If the Agness post office had closed, residents would have been forced to drive 70 miles round trip to and from Gold Beach for services.

"I'm glad that USPS listened to the community's concerns and pulled Agness from the chopping block. The closure would have placed a real burden on people in the area," said DeFazio. "Residents would have been forced to drive 70 miles on a winding road to receive mail service. I will continue to push the USPS to consider creative solutions that could save USPS substantial money and services. This news, along with the news that USPS is putting off their closure plans until May, is a step in the right direction."

USPS previously announced that several post offices in DeFazio's district would be closed if the postmaster's plan is carried out. Post offices still in danger of being closed include Broadbent, Cascadia, Deadwood, Gardiner, Swisshome, Tiller and Walton.

DeFazio has introduced two pieces of legislation to help solve the serious financial issues facing the USPS and protect postal service.

BACKGROUND ON DEFAZIO'S LEGISLATION

HR 3591, Postal Service Protection Act

- Companion legislation was introduced in the Senate by Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT)

- The bill fixes the immediate fiscal problems faced by USPS by allowing them to recover overpayments made to its pension plans. Estimates show that the Postal Service has overpaid by anywhere from \$7 to 50 billion.

- The bill eliminates the required \$5 billion a year pre-funding of future retiree health benefits.

- The bill prevents closure of rural post offices by giving the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRG) binding authority to prevent closures based on the effect on the community and on employees; not just profit. Currently the PRG only acts in an advisory role.

- The bill requires strict delivery standards for 1st class mail delivery that would make it more difficult to close area mail processing centers.

- The bill would statutorily require 6 day delivery.

- The bill establishes new ways for USPS to generate revenue by providing non-postal services like new media services, issuance of licenses, shipment of beer and wine and shifting more toward electronic mail.

HR 3592, Protecting Rural Post Office Act

- Companion legislation was introduced in the Senate by Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OR)
- The bill precludes USPS from closing any post office which results in more than 10 miles between any 2 post offices.

- 30 -